



News Release

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COMPASS, MERIDIAN SCHOOLS JOIN TREASURE VALLEY B20 BIODIESEL FUEL PARTNERSHIP

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The chance to explore new solutions for air quality problems in the Treasure Valley has prompted the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho and the Meridian School District to become partners in the Idaho Energy Division's B20 Treasure Valley biodiesel project, the Division announced today.

"COMPASS is firmly committed to the long-term health of Treasure Valley residents by protecting and improving the air quality in Ada and Canyon Counties. This commitment is fully consistent with your program goals," noted COMPASS Chairman Todd Lakey, a Canyon County Commissioner, in a letter to the Energy Division.

The Meridian School District will begin the program on a pilot basis with a limited number of its 200-bus fleet. District officials estimate the buses will use up to 50,000 gallons of B20 biodiesel over the coming six to eight months.

Both COMPASS and School District officials say their move is prompted by the proven ability of B20 to significantly reduce potentially harmful vehicle exhaust emissions common in diesel engines. The Meridian School District currently has some 200 diesel-powered buses in their fleet. Various school districts around the country routinely use B20 fuel to help reduce dangerous exhaust emissions from diesel-powered school buses.

The B-20 Treasure Valley biodiesel project involves using up to 125,000 gallons of B20 biodiesel over the next six to eight months in the Treasure Valley. B20 biodiesel is a fuel produced by mixing 20 percent biofuel and 80 percent regular petroleum diesel. The B20 mixture then can be used in diesel engines without any modification to the engine, according to Dick Larsen, the program manager.

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B20 biodiesel fuel burns cleaner than regular diesel greatly reducing harmful vehicle emissions common in diesel exhaust, especially dangerous particulates. B20 fuel can reduce particulates in diesel exhaust by up to 18 percent, air toxics by up to 20 percent, carbon monoxide by about 12 percent and hydrocarbons by 11 percent according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Biofuel is produced from common vegetable oils or recycled restaurant greases, used cooking oils, lard and animal tallow or fats among other things. The biofuel to be used in the Idaho project is produced from virgin soybean oil and will be supplied by World Energy Alternatives, LLC headquartered in Chelsea, Massachusetts, the leading supplier of biodiesel in the US, Larsen added

World Energy will ship the pure biofuel to United Oil, a partner in the project. United Oil will then mix it with regular diesel to produce the B20 fuel for delivery to the various partners.

A variety of diesel vehicles around the area will use the fuel during the project. These include four garbage and two recycling trucks from Sanitary Services Company of Meridian; 20-passenger commuter buses from Treasure Valley Transit; and, pickups, backhoes and dump trucks from United Water Idaho.

COMPASS has a particular interest in the B20 fuel because of it burns cleaner than regular diesel, especially in the area of particulates. Particulates are an air quality concern in the Valley according to June Ramsdell, a COMPASS technical analyst who is the agency's representative in the partnership.

COMPASS air quality officials are currently working to secure a Federal Transportation grant that would let the agency test B20 biodiesel including up to 200 school buses from the Meridian School District.

The partnership is also exploring the possibility that Idaho Department of Transportation emergency response units operating on Interstate 84 might also use the B20 biodiesel during the project. Other diesel users will be added as the program goes along.

A \$30,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy is paying for the program, which is being managed by the Idaho Energy Division. The partners will pay the normal price of petroleum diesel while the Energy Division pays the difference in cost between standard petroleum diesel and B20 diesel, typically about 15-20 cents per gallon.

For more information on the program contact Dick Larsen, (208) 327-7933.